

November 14, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Group (CI)
2 p.m., Thursday, November 14, 1963

PRESENT: Mr. Johnson vice Governor Harriman, The Attorney General, Mr. Bell
General Taylor, Mr. McCone, Mr. Forrestal, Mr. Bundy vice Mr.
Gilpatric, Mr. Wilson vice Mr. Murrow

Mr. Koren was present for Items 1, 2 and 3.

General Scherrer was present for Item No. 3.

Mr. Maechling and Mr. Nolan were present for the Meeting.

1. Counterinsurgency Intelligence Summary

Mr. McCone, in commenting on the intelligence memoranda distributed for this item, pointed out that the situation in Somali Republic is being carefully watched. It is difficult to make an appraisal of the situation in Viet-Nam as it is too early to predict how the new Government will act; however, it appears to have made an excellent start. The fighting in Laos is not considered to be serious, and it is hoped that Souvanna's return will help to stabilize the situation. The reported shipment of Cuban arms into Bolivia is not considered sufficiently serious to warrant attention at this time. It is anticipated that terrorists activities in Venezuela will continue up to the December 1 elections and after the elections the Betancourt Government will be able to take more decisive actions.

Mr. McCone agreed to circulate, to the principals, a modified version of the intelligence appraisal of the countries now under the Group's cognizance, that had previously been furnished to Governor Harriman for another purpose.

2. Southeast Asia Status Report

Viet-Nam - Mr. Bell stated that prior to the recent coup, a proposal had been made to reduce the size of the police advisory group and he raised the question as to the present status of this proposal. It was agreed that this would be a suitable item to discuss at the forthcoming Honolulu Conference.

General Taylor expressed his concern over the results being obtained in the Amnesty Program. Mr. Koren responded by stating that a downward trend had been apparent in September, and that the recent political difficulties had further adversely affected this program. He added that this item along with procedures to revitalize the hamlet program will be discussed in Honolulu.

Thailand - Mr. Bundy agreed to report back to the Group on corrective action being taken with regard to the defective locomotives sent to Thailand.

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The Group agreed with Mr. Forrestal's suggestion that State should dispatch a message to the Country Team requesting information on the status of efforts to get the Thai Government to prepare their own version of the Internal Security Plan. It is believed that once the Thais develop this plan, cooperation between their various ministries should improve.

The Group requested that State submit, with the next monthly status report, a special annex on the rural development and civic action programs in the Northeast, to include both US and Thai efforts.

Mr. Bell stated that he was concerned over the reduction in Thai funds required to support per diem and operating costs for the Border Patrol Police even though this had not adversely affected police operations. He will keep the Group advised of developments.

Mr. Bell commented that construction of the first two high-priority security roads is on schedule. Construction of additional roads under this program is still under discussion with the Thai Government.

3. Progress Report on the Internal Defense Plan for Cambodia

Mr. Koren presented a factual account of the recent public statements of Sihanouk, which threatened to terminate Western aid and to call for Chinese assistance. He pointed out that Sihanouk's actions have been influenced by his concern over developments in Viet-Nam, the reluctance of the French to provide more assistance, and his poor physical and mental state. At the present time, there are no significant dissident groups in Cambodia that pose a serious threat to the Government. Mr. Koren listed our policy moves to cope with this situation and stated that we hope to keep various options open to Sihanouk which would not preclude his backing down at a later date.

General Scherrer commented that the Cambodians have a deep-rooted fear that Thailand plans to eventually take over part of their country. Their economic situation is very poor, and the planned reduction in US aid has adversely affected our position. A requirement still exists to increase the mobility of the Cambodian Armed Forces. He believes that very few Cambodians want to be Communists, but as long as our assistance programs are being reduced, the US will continue to have problems in this country. He recommended that, if at all possible, we should maintain our assistance programs and let the Cambodians know that we plan to support them. He stated that the U.S. failure to provide military athletic coaches as requested has had an adverse effect on our programs with youth groups.

The Group noted the progress report.

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Mr. Bundy stated that the question of procurement of off-shore oil from the Caribbean area is being considered in another forum.

At the request of the Attorney General, Mr. McCone agreed to prepare a memorandum assessing the extent of Cuban support of Venezuelan terrorists and the extent of Cuban arms shipments to other Latin American countries.

The Group expressed its concern on the inadequacy of the intelligence effort in Venezuela and stated that, if required, additional assistance should be provided.

The Group agreed that the situation in Venezuela should be closely watched and agreed with the recommendation that the Interagency Working Group should continue its weekly meetings at least until the end of the year.

The Group requested that State dispatch a message to the Ambassador asking if he is aware and making use of the various assets of the US Government that are available to support the Venezuelan Government in its campaign against the terrorists.

Miscellaneous

A. The Group agreed to request Mr. Rostow to appear at a future meeting to discuss the National Policy Paper Program. It was suggested that Mr. Rostow circulate a paper describing the purpose and citing specific examples of this program.

B. The Group agreed that it would discuss the proposed NSAM on the responsibilities of the Special Group at a future meeting when Governor Harriman will be present.



Executive Secretary
Special Group (CI)

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